

**SIX**  
**RADIO TALKS**  
**ON**  
**THEOSOPHY**

**FIRST SERIES**

*As Presented By*

**THE FOUNDATION FOR**  
**RADIO THEOSOPHY**  
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**OJAI, CALIFORNIA**

## THE STORY OF THEOSOPHY

Before we begin our series of talks on the teachings of Theosophy, I thought you might like to hear the story of Theosophy itself. The first thing to realize is that Theosophy is ages older - literally ages older - than the Society which bears its name.

The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875, just 75 years ago; but Theosophy is as old as mankind. For it is the knowledge handed down "from mouth to ear" through the ages about man and his relationship to the Great Creative Intelligence we call God, about his relationship to the solar system and the universe we live in, and his relationship to his fellowman. It is the knowledge about his past and his future, his purpose-in-living and his goal.

There have always been from the beginning of time those who had this knowledge. Humanity was never left alone to flounder too helplessly, for it is a great brotherhood - older brothers and younger - a brotherhood of infant souls, young souls, mature souls, and old souls, like the great family of one Father. The older brothers, with many lives and great experience behind them, have always taught the younger as soon as they were ready to be taught, as soon as they qualified, by character as well as by intellect, to receive such teaching.

Since there has never, previous to now, been a time when the whole of mankind qualified to be offered the teaching, there has always been, on the one hand, a secret wisdom for the intelligent and high-minded few, and, on the other hand the popular body of ideas which the unthinking and unquestioning accepted to allay their fears and afford them comfort.

The story of the secret wisdom is inextricably bound up with the story of the Mystery Schools of antiquity. Among the earliest historical records is the account of the migrating Aryans coming down from Central Asia into India. They brought with them the traditions of the Mystery Schools, survivors of the high civilization of the lost continent of Atlantis, and they established the Mysteries in India thousands of years ago. From India the Mysteries were carried to Egypt and established there. Moses was an initiate of the The Egyptian Mystery Schools, and when he led his people

"out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage", he established in the new land the Mysteries of Israel and was himself the Hierophant therein. The Arabians and the Chaldeans had their mysteries. And those we are probably most familiar with are the Eleusinian Mysteries of Greece.

All these were as widely revered in ancient days as are our great universities and cathedrals of today. I compare them to our universities and our cathedrals because in those days religion and science and philosophy were not separated into different categories. They were taught as 3 phases of the one body of truth, the body of truth which has had so many names but which received in the 3rd century the name of Theosophy, meaning Divine Wisdom. The Schools were held to be so vital to the welfare of the state that their protection was part of international treaties; and the initiates of the Greater Mysteries were the outstanding men of every nation.

Now all the teaching in those schools was most sacredly secret. The neophyte who entered took solemn vows of secrecy, but there was a still surer protection; the wisdom was taught in symbol and allegory and drama so that even the pupil himself did not get the full significance of the visual education provided him until he had passed numerous tests of character. Then, when his true worth was proven, the Hierophant revealed to him the hidden meaning. So, one who failed to pass the tests of character might break his vows and tell all he had seen; but, not having the key to it all, what he could tell meant nothing. Many of the myths of Greece and Rome which seem like elaborate fairy tales are in reality these symbolic dramas of the Mystery Schools.

Why should there have been all that secrecy? Because the ancients knew as well as we do that knowledge is power. And they knew - perhaps better than we - that only the good and the selfless can be safely entrusted with the power which great knowledge gives. Knowledge is intended to be used for the advancement of mankind. When men use it for selfish, greedy or malignant purposes, disaster follows. So all through the centuries extreme care was taken to protect the unworthy from knowledge which was beyond their power to handle, and to protect Society from the dangers which would ensue. Careful judgment was used when permitting any of the



information to be given out for public use.

It is hard for us to realize how much concrete knowledge there was in olden times. It seems strange to us to know that the Egyptians knew the astronomical measurements of our solar system; knew enough about electricity to use swords for lightning rods on their houses; had malleable glass, unbreakable cement, and fadeless colors which to this day endure the desert sun without losing their brilliance. Or, to realize that the Phoenicians encircled the globe many times in their little ships. Euclid is quoted as having said: "All that I know of Geometry was taught me in the Mystery Schools."

It was a tragic time in history when the day of the Mysteries came to an end. But end it did.

The sword of Alexander the Great - who feared wise enemies - razed one great center of learning after another. The Roman Tiberius was another destroyer. But the sad human factor was the gradual deterioration of the schools themselves as more and more persons succumbed to the temptation to use their knowledge for their own gain and against the general good. When that happened the Hierophants themselves ordered their Schools closed.

It has sometimes been said that the enmity of the new Christian Church destroyed the ancient Mysteries. But this is not so. The Mysteries of Jesus were established along the lines of the old. But the whole great system went out of existence because of the failure of the people to maintain the necessary standards.

What happened then to this secret wisdom? Did it disappear from the earth entirely? Indeed not! It "went underground". Not only was the teaching henceforth secret, but even the fact that such teaching existed was kept secret.

Among the Romans appeared a College of Architects, sometimes called the Society of Builders. It was a Secret Society. They used for their symbol the keystone of the Roman arch; and hidden in the symbolism of their profession and their craft they kept alive the essential elements of the ancient wisdom. Emissaries from there in time went north to build

the great cathedrals of Europe. In Scotland and in York they established the Orders of Freemasonry, secret and symbolic guardians of the wisdom. Also through mediaeval Europe wandered the troubadours and minstrel singers, ostensibly entertainers, but actually teachers of the wisdom in song and fable and disguise. The Alchemists of the Middle Ages carried on the tradition. Pretending to seek a way to transmute metals into gold, they were actually striving to transmute ignorance into learning, and evil into good. The Rosicrucians carried on the same work under another symbolism.

Always in secret the wisdom was taught. Until 1875.

It seemed at long last then that the human race had evolved sufficiently - had grown up enough - to be given the chance to have free access to knowledge concerning the facts of Nature.

Whatever we may think of the progress or retrogression of civilization over the centuries, it seems obvious that the over-all average intellect is keener, and the common standard of action and character higher in the mass than ever before.

So today The Theosophical Society, the inheritor of the ancient wisdom, is not a secret society; and Theosophy is taught openly and freely in the printed book, on the public platform and even by radio.

For the next several weeks we shall share with you in these broadcasts some of these truths which have been handed down to us through the ages, even until now.

## THE PURPOSE OF LIVING

Friends: Last week we discussed the great antiquity of the ancient wisdom which is today called Theosophy. This morning we thought you might like to know how very modern it also is.

Does that sound like a contradiction? It truly is not, because Theosophy is a search for Truth, and as such is timeless; it is a search for the answers to the eternal questionings of man. And those answers are to be found in the oldest wisdom possessed by the human race and also in the latest and newest findings of research.

For example: the ancient, secret teaching said that the smallest particles of matter were miraculously like solar systems, and that every particle of matter was impregnated with life, in fact existed only to be a vehicle for life. Modern science has verified every syllable of this and added a wealth of minute detail about the electrons which revolve about the nucleus of the atom exactly like planets about a sun -- in truth a miniature solar system filled with life and energy. The amazing amount of energy locked up in an atom is a modern wonder.

For another example: the ancients were taught that gods and goddesses sustained the world. These were male and female energies personified. Modern science calls those male and female energies positive and negative forces in nature, such as positive electricity and negative electricity, or magnetism.

Again: the higher teachers in the ancient Mystery Schools made use of telepathy as a means of communication. Popular knowledge for many centuries has scoffed at the very idea of telepathy or thought transference. Today science under Dr. Rhine at Duke University has proven beyond question the actuality of telepathy.

From all these - the most ancient and the most recent - Theosophy draws its source material.

The 20th Century is a thrilling time to be alive because of the wealth of newly discovered detail which is being



added to that great outline of the ancient, secret wisdom. You may then ask - as some of you have - "Is Theosophy a Science?" The answer to that is that Theosophy is neither a science, nor a religion, nor a philosophy, although it contains elements of all three. While not a science, it is yet scientific in that it seeks to know all that can be discovered or realized about the material and psychological side of life with which science is concerned. In the same way it is not a religion, and yet it is definitely religious in that its students consciously seek understanding of and union with the divine spark within them which is their link with God; and they recognize the great truth, that every human creature without any exception whatsoever, has within him that same identical link with the Godhead. Likewise, Theosophy is not a philosophy, though it is strongly philosophical in its recognition of the total of human knowledge and its speculation about the as yet unknown.

Let me interrupt to say that I hope you will continue to ask questions as freely as you like. You may address simply "Theosophy", care the station to which you are listening. Such questions as seem to be of general interest we will answer on this program. Others will be answered personally by mail. Here is a question which is typical of some which you have been asking: Quote. "You say that Theosophy explains man's purpose-in-living. What is it? Does it make life really worth living? If so, I could use it." End of quote.

There must be many, bewildered by the heavy problems of the world and of daily living, who are asking just such a question. There are those who say: "I did not ask to be born" and are convinced that that relieves them of responsibility. Others feel their responsibility well enough, but think the burden too heavy. All are helped by knowing something of the purpose of it all.

The purpose is growth - a growing in character and in fineness of action and in understanding. You do not stand still, even in one lifetime. You are steadily growing and progressing in one way or another, and experience is your teacher. You may not think it, but the chances are 1000 to 1 that you are a better person than you were 10 years

ago - more skilled, more sympathetic and more understanding. The same chance holds for the 10 years ahead of you, if you have even the faintest desire to better yourself. Every experience which goes deep into your consciousness leaves its mark there. And it is you who are doing the growing, the evolving, and who will eventually reincarnate in a body better suited to express your greater intelligence and finer sensitivities.

Does it make life worth living? Most certainly it does, for it shows that you are the creator of your own future. The more you grow in this life - the more talents you develop - the more human sympathy you acquire - the wider will be your field of opportunity in your next incarnation. But if you run away from life, life will run away from you and you will continue to live in a humdrum routine. It all depends on you, yourself.

"Be ye perfect", said the Christ; and that means not only being perfectly good, but also being perfectly efficient, and perfectly wise. Now it is abundantly clear that we cannot step from our present condition to the stage of perfection in all these things in the few years allotted to us in this lifetime. But the divine plan gives us the time we need to achieve the purpose. Man grows by way of experience in life after life. Look about you in the world and see for yourself the different stages in soul growth. See the infant soul in the primitive and the savage. See the young soul in the uncouth and the criminal. See, perhaps, the adolescent soul, in the skilled, the clever and the cock-sure. See the mature soul in the better members of the professions, the social workers, the religious and the idealists. See the old souls in the great philosophers, scientists and artists, the saints, sages, and leaders of the world.

All these are successive stages in growth of the soul of man. Wherever you stand, you see younger souls on the rungs of the ladder below you, and older souls on the rungs above you; and all are climbing towards the ultimate goal which is perfection.

That is one part - the inner part - of the purpose-in-living. There is another side - the outer side - also in the great purpose, and that is - mastery of the physical, material



world. Through your many lives of experience at the physical level, you slowly come to understand the laws of Nature and to work intelligently with her. You cease to be the victims of the material world and become the victors over it.

We said in a previous broadcast that mankind is growing up. And one evidence of that lies in man's increasing mastery over the material world. He no longer toils on foot or on horseback over tedious trails, because he has mastered the problems of steam and electricity and created modern transportation. He no longer superstitiously fears the thunder and lightning, because he understands electric power, heat and light. In the inner way of life evidence of growing up is to be found in the increase of philanthropy and all the social services. Self-centeredness shows some evidence of giving way gradually to altruism.

Through all this you are a free soul. Through the problems and experiences which come your way you grow in your own unique manner. You make your own choices, and then face the consequences of your choice. From those consequences, pleasant or painful, you learn. It even happens sometimes that one learns more from a mistake he has made than from a success. Henry Ford once said: "I have never made a mistake in my life. What might be called a mistake has actually been only a means of turning me from a wrong way of doing a thing, to the right way - and so, has really been a success."

Thus, through mistakes and successes, through trial and error, through effort of the mind and heart, man grows and evolves the qualities which in due time will bring him to his goal - the goal of perfection and of mastery. Such is the purpose-in-living for man. In conclusion, let me quote these lines from a theosophical classic: "The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit. The principle which gives life is within us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception. Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment."

## "AS A MAN THINKETH"

You have probably heard it said many times that a person creates his own little world as he lives from day to day. Psychologists and students of human nature agree on that. The average person subscribes to the idea without understanding exactly the "how" or the "why." In Theosophy can be found a logical and reasonable explanation of how it comes about that we do create the atmosphere we live in.

If you will bear with me for a couple of minutes I will give you something of the technical side of the matter before going on to its practical application. This is a rather special information which has not yet become common knowledge. It deals with two points. The first, a simple one fairly well known, concerns the triple nature of your personality - that it is mental, emotional, and physical, involved in mind, feeling, and body. The second point is more complex and not so widely known. It is that there are different grades of matter through which these three aspects function.

You are naturally familiar with different types of matter on the physical level, some visible and some invisible - solid matter, liquid matter, gaseous, and etheric. Theosophy explains that the gradations go on from there in a continuous scale: that matter ever finer and subtler becomes adaptable to ever finer and subtler uses.

Thus it happens that there is a form of matter, invisible but perceptible, which is affected by feelings and emotions. This emotional matter completely permeates your whole physical body and a certain small area surrounding it. It can therefore be said that you have an emotional body. This is commonly called the astral body because, to those who have extended vision and can see this very tenuous matter, it appears radiant, starlike, astral. Now there is also a still finer and subtler form of matter which is affected by thought, and can thus be called mental matter. Again, this rarified matter completely permeates your entire physical body, your entire emotional body and extends in space beyond them both. It can therefore be said that you have a mental body, a mind body made of "mind stuff". So, you see, you are not only triple in your consciousness - your psyche - but you are triple in this very complex body which your psyche uses all

during your lifetime.

It is these two subtler bodies which persist after the death of the physical body and which account for the fact, affirmed by Theosophy and verified by psychical research, that a person is exactly the same immediately after death as he was before. No one becomes an angel or a demon by the mere act of dying, for death is simply the leaving behind of the heaviest and densest of the three bodies and going on in the other two. It is something like putting aside a heavy winter overcoat in the spring. The man is hardly changed thereby!

After death the person continues to live and function in his emotional and mental bodies in what is on the whole a pleasant stage of existence in the Intermediate World where he goes through a sort of refining process which gradually purges out of his nature the coarsest and most earthy emotional elements. The length of time consumed in this process varies with the individual. It may last a year or even less, and it may last a century or even more.

Then occurs what could be called a second death. When the emotional body has outworn its usefulness it too is laid aside and the man, clothed now in his mental body, enters the subtler levels of the mental world which we call Heaven. Here he grows through happiness and fulfilment and joy just as, on Earth, he grew through effort and struggle and sorrow. As in the intermediate, or astral, world the time consumed in the Heaven world varies. For some it is a matter of a few years; for some a matter of several centuries.

But ultimately the usefulness of even the mental body comes to an end and it is left behind while the soul, the true man, goes to his spiritual home in the world of divine love and unity, before returning to the school of Earth for more experience, for his next lessons.

When once the consciousness makes that turn again towards Earth and the seeking of additional experience, a new train of events begins. By the power of attraction of like to like, there is drawn towards this unit of consciousness, mental matter of exactly the same rate of vibration as



that of the mental body he had left behind him - and no other. Next there gravitates towards him emotional matter of his own rate of vibration - and no other. Then, in accordance with another natural law which we have no time to consider today, these are drawn to a newly formed embryo - to parents with whom he has some tie of experience or affection.

Thus he begins his new life equipped with a mental and emotional set-up for which he - and none other - has set the key.

During the first seven years of the new life he builds his new physical body and he - the soul - learns to use it. Then, from the age of seven to fourteen, he revels in the use of that body, running, jumping, shouting, climbing, all in delight over the ability to use the new body, while at the same time he is building and organizing his emotional body and learning how to use it. In the third seven years - from fourteen to twenty-one - he revels in the use his new emotional body, is full of excitements, thrills, loves, quarrels, and so on, while he is developing and learning to use his mental body.

Some people never really develop their mental bodies adequately but live their lives through at the emotional level. Others - older souls, of course - go on to further development, revelling in the use of their agile mental bodies while organizing and developing their spiritual body, a fit instrument for the soul.

Well, so much for the technical information. What is its value to you? Simply this. You begin to realize that the key to your life lies within yourself, lies deep within the inner recesses of your own consciousness, your own soul. You come to know yourself as the controller of your bodies, your three bodies. You recognize that you are influenced by them but certainly need not be dominated by them. You begin to feel yourself in control, helping them to grow according to a pattern which you yourself set for them.

We come now to the consideration of one of the great teachings of our Christian scriptures - "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

This is variously interpreted to mean that if a man thinks he is sick, he is sick and cannot know health; that if he thinks of himself as being poor, then he will never have riches. True enough. But it would seem that that is limiting a great and universal truth to its purely physical application. Great truths can be interpreted at all levels. Thus, while it is true to say that if one constantly thinks of or fears illness then he will not be healthy, it is also true to say that on the emotional level if he allows himself to be habitually gloomy or fault-finding, then the emotions of happiness will elude him. And rising to the mental level, it is also true to say that if he habitually thinks separative thoughts of superiority or of prejudice, he will not be able fully to realize the joys of friendship and human cooperation. And at the spiritual level we can restate this great truth by saying that as a man is aware of himself in the secret places of his own consciousness before God, so does he show himself forth through the three agencies of that consciousness, his thoughts, his feelings and his actions, and so will the world react upon him.

The practical value of this knowledge to you is that you become aware of your own possibilities, and of your own strength. You know that it is you who are in control; that you are not, as you supposed, at the mercy of the discomforts of the physical body, at the mercy of your temper or your depressions and your appetites, nor do you need to be tormented by thoughts which you wish to avoid. You cease to identify yourself with your body or your feelings or your thoughts. And you come to the great realization that you - the immortal soul - are in control of them. That as you are, so are they. That as you will to be, so will they be. That you can name your ideal and build yourself into its likeness. That your mental ideal, your moral ideal, and your physical ideal are the patterns upon which you can mold your future self. That as you will to be, so you shall be.

You discover yourself to be a co-worker in the divine plan.

## "AS YE SOW"

When once a person begins to ask questions of life, to ask "Why?," he opens up a vast new field of thought for himself. But until he begins to question seriously he simply goes along with the crowd, unthinkingly accepting whatever comes his way, pleasant or unpleasant, easy or difficult. He rejoices or complains emotionally, but with little thought or understanding.

Now all human nature has one rather amusing trait. It never questions its good fortune. A stroke of good luck is accepted as a sort of natural right. And a lifetime lived in pleasant and fortunate circumstances has been known to create a sense of superiority over others less fortunate. All this without questioning the process of fate or fortune. But let misfortune strike! Ah, that's a different story. Then the questions fly. The ministers, the priests, and the psychiatrists all say the same thing - that the commonest question asked by people who come to them in their trouble is "Why should this happen to me"? But no one, when he has had a stroke of good luck, dreams of running to anyone to ask why this should happen to him. He knows. At least he thinks he does.

Perhaps, when some particularly hard blow of fortune has come your way, you too have asked this universal question only to be told that it is God's will and you must accept it. Perhaps you protested that it was unjust and cruel and that an all-loving God could not have sent this tragedy to you. Or perhaps you were told that God's love moves in mysterious ways, and you may have protested that such a God of Love must be powerless to run His universe rightly, or there would be no such suffering. And your tortured mind which wants to believe, which knows instinctively that the truth would make all things reasonable, is torn between two unhappy ideas - the idea of a God of Love who is helpless before His creation; and the idea of an Omnipotent God who has little love for His humanity. Much of the irreligion and agnosticism of the present day stem from this stage in man's thinking. And a very unhappy stage it is.

All the great religions of the world have the answer, every



one of them. And Theosophy helps make that answer clear to the minds of men. It is the answer which our own Christian religion gives in the solemn words of St. Paul when he said: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." And yet the sufferer, deep in his misery may protest saying: "It is not true. I have sown kindness, yet this cruelty has come to me"; or "I have given freely and gladly yet my all has been taken from me."

And Theosophy replies: "The answer lies deep. Listen and you shall hear." For man is an eternal being, even though he persists in thinking in terms of three score years and ten. And the world's great teachings have been interpreted against the smaller background of one short life of man, instead of being understood against the greater background of eternity, which the soul knows.

Christ talked to the souls of men. He and His disciples taught in terms of eternity. Yet we make the pitiful mistake of trying to cut down those magnificent teachings to the size of our little, temporal selves.

We have told you in previous talks on this hour that your soul - which means your unique individuality - is an eternal thing and that it experiences life in this physical world alternately with life in superphysical worlds, continuously through the ages. It is a system of growth and progress. It is a system of spiritual evolution. In that system there is complete justice, complete loving-kindness and wisdom. When once man has caught even the faintest glimpse of that Plan, he knows forever that God is both the God of Love and the God of Power, and also the God of Beauty Who "mightily and sweetly ordereth all things."

Now today we are asking how Theosophy interprets and explains the seeming injustices of life. How are the apparent injustices to be reconciled with what we have been taught since childhood - that "as ye sow, so shall ye reap"? All of us, I am sure, have at some time had the experience of observing a person set out without scruple to "outsmart" someone else to gain financially at that person's tragic expense, or to destroy someone's social standing in the community by slander or gossip, without himself coming to

harm. We even read in the papers of persons who are known to be criminal and yet go scot free- who do all in their power to spread evil, drunkenness or vice in the community or nation and grow rich on it, and who yet seem immune before the law. Justice, you say? Where is it?

Or again you read about a man who has served ten years in prison for a crime he did not commit. The true criminal finally confesses and the prisoner is released with an apology and an effort towards financial compensation. Ten years of disgrace and imprisonment for something he did not do. Justice, you say? Where is it?

Theosophy, the world's ancient wisdom, explains that justice lies in the truth that the result is as sure as the cause, but the timing of the result may be not a matter of years but may be a matter of lives. Some lessons, in order to make a deep and lasting impression on the soul-consciousness, require more than one lifetime of experience to work the full cause into the full effect.

Surely not everything begun by us finds the time or the necessary circumstances to work itself out into its full consequence in a single lifetime. If we were able to stand off somewhere in space-time and watch the whole picture unroll, we might just possibly find that the man who unloosed crime in a past life and "got away with it" living in luxury and pleasure to the end of his days, may be the same soul who - under another name and another personality - is serving time in prison today although he has in this particular life committed no crime.

The ancient wisdom proclaims that there is no cause without its effect, be that effect soon or late; and that there is no effect without its cause, recent or remote. Listen again to the words of St. Paul: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

This law of cause and effect was called by Emerson the Law of Compensation. In some parts of the world it goes by the Sanskrit name of karma, K-A-R-M-A. And because that single, simple word, karma, conveys so much, it has come into fairly common use.

Now karma is in no sense to be considered in terms of reward and punishment, although it may superficially appear to be just that. I want to make it very clear to you that we do not receive these blows or these gifts from Fate either as rewards for good deeds or as punishments for evil deeds. They come to us solely as natural reactions and as part of our education in living, as lessons to be learned by the soul in the school of life.

You well know that the best way to teach a child right behavior is to let him face the consequences of his own acts. The all-wise Father of us all grants every man the right to face the consequences of his own acts, his own thoughts, and his own emotions. By experiencing in daily life the consequences of causes which he himself has at some time or other set in motion, he learns more surely and completely than he could possibly learn otherwise, the helpfulness or the harmfulness of the thing he has done. Slowly there is born in on his inner consciousness a deep and profound conviction as to the rightness or wrongness of certain courses of action.

Therefore it is natural that an older, wiser soul should have a stronger moral nature than a younger more ignorant soul. You will find that students of Theosophy are far more likely to speak of ignorance than of sin, and of wisdom than of virtue. For our virtues and our vices reduce themselves quite simply to wisdom or ignorance. And we begin to recognize the profound sympathy and meaning in the words of Jesus on the cross when he prayed "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

An understanding of the twin laws of reincarnation and karma restore to struggling man the sense of his own dignity and of the dignity of the whole human race. Through these two laws we can begin to glimpse the wisdom of the divine plan, the divine justice which rules the world, letting nothing come to man which he has not himself earned, and the divine love which enfolds humanity as it struggles through trial and error to reach the heights of nobility, wisdom, and brotherhood which mark the goal set by the divine Father for all of His children.



## REINCARNATION AND HEREDITY

When, in these broadcasts, we have dealt with the subject of the growth of the soul through many lives on earth, you have doubtless found questions arising in your mind about these new and perhaps strange ideas. One of these questions is very likely to concern itself with heredity. The widely accepted idea is that we are as we are because of our heredity and the environment in which we grew up. Yet Theosophy seems to say that we are as we are because of the stage of our soul-growth.

Which, then, is right? Are we the products of our ancestry or are we the products, so to speak, of ourselves? Actually we are both. From our ancestors we receive our physical bodies. But our emotional, mental, and spiritual equipment is of our own making and we have brought it with us from our past lives on earth into this life which we are living now. Both are right. And Theosophy has a revealing light to throw on the whole subject of heredity and environment.

It explains that at each new incarnation, at each birth into a new earth-life, man receives bodies which correspond with his stage of soul-growth. We use the word "bodies" purposefully because man lives in more than one body. By that we mean that he lives in his physical body, his emotional body, his mental body and spiritual body all at once. As soul he lives in a spiritual body through which he functions by intuition and inspiration, he lives in a mental body through which he functions by thought, in an emotional or astral body through which he functions by feelings, emotions and his moral nature, and in a physical body through which he functions by actions and the receptions of sensation.

Man is truly a complex being and lives simultaneously in three, nay four, worlds. His spiritual experience is inextricably bound up with his mental and emotional experience. His physical experiences are similarly bound up with emotional and mental experience so that it is difficult to differentiate feeling from thought and thought from inspiration, and to know what prompts our physical world actions. Only by recognizing these four different aspects of himself - actually there are seven, but for all practical purposes, the four suffice - can man understand himself and his relationship to the worlds he lives in.

Now as to heredity, the only thing which you can inherit from your ancestors - besides worldly goods, of course - is the purely physical part of you, your physical body. Your moral nature is your own; you have built it through your emotional experiences and reactions in other lives. Your mentality is your own; you have through your own mental efforts in previous lives brought it to its present potentiality. And your spiritual nature is definitely your own unique selfhood.

That uniqueness is reflected in the mental and moral attributes of the Self. And as your Self approached birth for this life, or incarnation, there was automatically attracted to you, by those attributes, material for your new mental body to correspond exactly to the type of mental body with which you ended your previous life. It could be of no better and no worse mind-stuff than you yourself had caused it to be. Likewise, there was automatically attracted to you, by your inherent attributes, material for your new emotional body which corresponded exactly to the type of emotional and moral nature with which you ended your previous life. Your moral nature can be no better and no worse than you yourself have made it. This three-fold self was then attracted to the parents who provided for you a suitable body for the present incarnation.

Now always, at this point, when the soul, clothed in the pattern of its coming emotional and mental bodies, is drawn to the parents who will give him birth - at this point an outside force enters in.

The powers behind the scenes - and there are unseen forces constantly at work carrying out the mandates of natural law, which is Divine Law - the powers behind the scenes direct the physical forces of inheritance. They draw upon the genes in the parental chromosomes and the genes in the cytoplasm for hereditary factors which are to be built into the body of the new infant. Biologists have examined this process meticulously. In the November, 1950, issue of Scientific American is this statement: "The weight of evidence indicates that the cytoplasm - all the surrounding material of the cell outside the nucleus - is an active partner with the nucleus and its chromosomes in the control of inheritance." end of quote.



It is common knowledge that the embryo is built from the pattern set by the genes and the gene-like factors of the parental cells. It is also commonly recognized that children of one set of parents differ widely, since no two children seem to draw on exactly the same genes of the parents. These facts are answers to the question, "How does heredity work"? To find an answer to the question, "Why does heredity work"? we turn to Theosophy, the ancient wisdom of the world.

There we learn that the lesson which the soul needs to learn in the coming incarnation becomes a compelling factor in determining the kind of physical body he is to have. The work which is to be his, in his new life, is also a heavily contributing factor in the type of body he needs to have. If left to his own devices, the Self would prefer to select factors making for a vigorous and handsome body of abounding health. But he comes face to face with the laws of destiny and karma, powers far greater and wiser than he. As he sinks into the unconsciousness of the prenatal time, he yields to the great law which provides for him exactly the physical limitations and exactly the physical excellencies which will help the indwelling soul to move readily forward into the next phase of its evolution.

If the incoming soul, or ego, is to develop a particular gift, such as music for example, there will need to be drawn from the parents the factors which will provide an abnormally sensitive nervous system plus a special development of the cells of the ear, likewise specialties of the hands or the throat if he is to be an instrumentalist or a singer. An interesting example of this came to my attention a while ago by way of a magazine article about the violin virtuoso, Yehudi Menuhin. His mother was quoted as telling that when he was three years old she made the startling discovery that the fingers of his left hand were considerably longer than the fingers of his right hand. It was a great puzzle to the whole family. Yet what a wise provision for one destined to be one of the world's leading concert violinists. In the same way, the coming dancer will draw upon the parents for factors making for delicate muscular control, and strong feet through which to express the sense of motion and rhythm which belongs to his inner life. Or the coming ditch-digger will draw upon the factors making for heavy bony structure and resilient muscles.



On the other hand, if the incoming man needs to have his inner strength aroused by a handicap, or his nature purified by suffering, other appropriate factors will be drawn upon. It may be some factor which brings about a lack of virility or a lack of resistance to disease, or even a malformation so that deformities result. Whatever is the work for the ego, or the lesson for the ego, determines what the laws of destiny will draw for him from his ancestry.

This knowledge that man's characteristics are self-created and that his physical body is simply an instrument suited for those characteristics, has a very practical application in the development of character. For example, if you scold a child because he doesn't control his temper and you say in exasperation, "Oh you have your grandfather's temper all over again," it may be that the child, adoring his grandfather, assumes that it is fine to have something of his grandfather's and feels no urge to change it. But when he becomes old enough to realize this truth that his temper is his very own and that only he can become master of it, his whole attitude will change. He will discover that he has inherited a highstrung nervous system which responds to anger, but that the thoughts of anger and the emotions of anger are products of his own emotional and mental bodies, and of no one's else. Thus the child or the man comes to realize that he is the creator of his own destiny and not the helpless victim of either his heredity or his environment. This realization adds stature to man's own dignity, and brings a challenge to his deepest inner capacities.

Thus you see that you create your own mental and moral potentialities and that you are given a physical body which will permit you to express them. Every strength which you build in this life is yours for all time. Every beautiful attribute which you permit to flower in your inmost nature is yours for all time. These will be determining factors in the heredity which will be yours when again you return to birth upon this earth.

## THE AFTER-DEATH LIFE

It is a natural thing occasionally to turn one's thoughts to the great idea of immortality. There are times when every man questions his own convictions as to his personal survival. In his heart he longs to know what awaits him.

Theosophy explains human immortality on grounds of philosophy. While psychic research has contributed much valuable material to document the teachings of the ancient wisdom in this field, still the facts concerning human survival stand firmly on the basis of philosophy and psychology as handed down through the ages. While psychology is a new science in the West, it is a very ancient study in the East.

The great philosophies and religions of the world have all agreed that man is more than a physical body. Theosophy teaches that it is only the physical body which dies when an incarnation ends. All else goes on. The moral, mental, and spiritual life of a man goes on. Theosophy says clearly that the emotional life of a person continues after his physical body dies. His - or her - mental life continues after the physical body dies. Without the physical body he - or she - can no longer function in the physical world; but he continues to function in his moral and mental vehicles in the moral and mental worlds.

Death comes like a deep sleep, even when it comes suddenly. When the man awakens, he usually doesn't know that he has died. Quite a few recent movies have told this part of the story very well. Some friend who died before him is there to help him understand what has happened. And what usually amazes the newly dead is that he feels more alive than he can remember feeling. Of course, because the delicate grades of matter which now form his vehicles are not subject to the physical laws of inertia and fatigue. Consequently he feels a tremendous energy and vigor - release, and the resultant joy. He finds too that his surroundings are typical of what he likes best and desires most in life. This is a working out of the law that like attracts like. No matter what he is morally and emotionally, he awakens into exactly the conditions, pleasant or unpleasant, which correspond to his moral and emotional level. His consciousness is now centered in his emotional nature in the emotional world.

To understand this perhaps it is necessary first to know something of the unseen structure of our world. There is a very interesting parallelism between the way a human being is built and the way the world is built.

You have doubtless heard it said that "seven" is a mysterious number. It is not particularly mysterious, but it is interesting. Seven is the key number upon which our world has been built: seven colors in the spectrum, seven notes in the musical scale, seven kinds of matter of which our world is made - physical matter, radiant matter, mental matter, and so on - and seven subdivisions of each. On the physical plane, the seven subdivisions, or seven degrees of density are recognized as solid, liquid, gaseous, and the four grades of ether.

Next in density to the physical world is the emotional world built of radiant matter, likewise in seven degrees of density, the heaviest and coarsest of which responds to crude and vulgar emotions and the finest to the most elevated of the emotions.

Next in density to the emotional world, sometimes called "astral" because of its radiance, is the mental world. It also is sevenfold and responds to seven grades of intellection from the simple, concrete to the most complex and intuitive abstractions. These worlds surround and interpenetrate our physical world; and the spiritual world enfolds them all. Man's inner nature is organized to correspond with all of them. And it is into these very real and vital worlds that man moves at so-called death.

Everything appears the same to him as it did in his earth life, but its effect upon him is now emotional instead of physical and his reactions to it accord with his emotional and moral nature. It is the law that man shall move into the emotional, or astral, world after death at his own level. He finds himself in the moral and esthetic atmosphere which expresses his own nature and no other. There he stays, very much alive, and functioning according to his deepest desires, for a period of from five to fifty years. During this period a sort of refining process goes on, so that the person becomes gradually less earthy and increasingly benevolent. This period, like the physical, is a mixture of the pleas-



ant and the unplesant. The pleasant side of it is called paradise because of its joys, and the unpleasant side of it is sometimes called purgatory because of the gradual purging out of the coarser elements in the moral nature. But in all cases it becomes increasingly pleasant as time goes on, until the individual drifts into the next plane of consciousness, the mental or heaven world.

Moving from one world into another does not signify any movement in space but simply a change in consciousness. Heaven, for example, is not a place. It is a state of consciousness. Now all selfishness, of whatever kind, is emotional. Therefore nothing tinged with selfishness can possibly enter the purely mental experience which is Heaven; and Heaven, as all the legends have told us, is pure happiness, sheer bliss.

Every human being, no matter how depraved, has something in his mental nature which brings him a touch of Heaven. No one, in God's plan is denied his Heaven. No one. As in the emotional world, the individual newly arrived in the Heaven world finds his or her proper level by the infallible law of attraction. That which he is in his solitude of thought determines the phase of the Heaven-life to which he can respond and of which he is a part.

If his only virtue is a devotion to his family through which he expresses a certain unselfishness, that is enough to give him his taste of the Heaven-consciousness in his after-death life. If he has in his nature a reverence for life and for great beings who have preceded him, he will respond to a higher level of the Heaven world and find his greater joy there. If he is an artist who creates not for reward or fame, but for the spiritual elevation of his fellows, or if he seeks insight for the purpose of enlightening the world, or if he is open to spiritual teaching, he will find himself on a still higher plane of his Heaven world and his stay there will be longer.

The more highly developed a person is in his thinking and his aspirations the longer will be his stay in the Heaven world. There every man experiences the highest and purest joy of which he is capable; and this experience is absolutely necessary for him. Only under the special conditions of the Heaven life can his aspirations be developed into faculty

and his experience into wisdom. It is there that he grows through joy and fulfillment, just as he grows on earth through sorrow and effort, and in the intermediate world through the process of refining. All is growth. And man's ultimate goal is nothing less than perfection.

"This is the scheme of evolution for man at the present stage - that he shall develop by descending into grossest matter and then ascend to carry back into himself the result of experiences obtained.

His real life therefore covers thousands and thousands of years, and what we are in the habit of calling a life is only one day in this greater experience." \*\*

Heaven comes to us not as a reward but as a natural sequence in a natural process. Reward, such as there is, comes in the duration and the elevation of the Heaven experience, and it comes after each incarnation. It is from the Heaven world that we return to earth. The poet Wordsworth said it in the words, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy" ... and "trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home."

And the Book of Revelation tells poetically of the victory of one who attains that perfection which is our goal and which marks the last, victorious incarnation of an individual in these words: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God and he shall go forth no more."

\*\* Textbook of Theosophy: Leadbeater

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